

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 09274 171819Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /059 W

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R 171757Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2060

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: BY-ELECTION TO TEST LABOR STRENGTH

1. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S FIRST BY-ELECTION TEST SINCE  
THE OCT. 9 GENERAL ELECTION WILL COME JUNE 26 IN LONDON  
-- THE GREENWICH, WOOLWICH WEST CONSTITUENCY. LABOR WILL  
BE SEEKING TO RETAIN THE SEAT VACATED BY THE DEATH OF  
WILLIAM HAMLING WHO IN OCTOBER RETAINED THE SEAT WITH A  
3,500 VOTE (8.5 PERCENT) MARGIN. JOE STANYER, A 36 YEAR  
OLD LABOR ACTIVIST FROM THE CONSTITUENCY WILL DEFEND THE  
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PAGE 02 LONDON 09274 171819Z

SEAT AGAINST CONSERVATIVE PETER BOTTOMLEY, AGE 30. BOT-

TOMLEY IS DESCRIBED AS A LEFT-WING TORY AND FOUGHT THE SEAT IN BOTH FEBRUARY AND OCTOBER 1974. ACCORDINGLY, HE IS WELL KNOWN IN THE CONSTITUENCY. LIBERAL PARTY IS ALSO FIELDING A CANDIDATE, MRS. SHEILAGH HOBDA. THERE ARE, IN ADDITION, FRINGE CANDIDATES REPRESENTING THE FOLLOWING GROUPS: THE NATIONAL FRONT; FELLOWSHIP PARTY; ENGLISH NATIONAL PARTY; AND CONSERVATIVES AGAINST THE COMMON MARKET.

2. COMMENT: THE BY-ELECTION PROMISES TO BE VERY CLOSE (A 4.3 PERCENT SHIFT FROM LABOR TO CONSERVATIVE WOULD DO THE TRICK) WITH THE CONSERVATIVES APPEARING TO HAVE THE EDGE. LABOR IS WORRIED THAT THE SEAT MAY BE LOST THROUGH A COMBINATION OF NORMAL BY-ELECTION APATHY AMONG LABOR VOTERS, BACKLASH FROM LABOR ANTI-MARKETEERS (BY ABSTENTION OR VOTING FOR THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE) AND DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE TORIES, FOR THEIR PART, SENSE VICTORY. SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD REDUCE LABOR'S CURRENT THREE SEAT MAJORITY TO A RAZOR-THIN SINGLE SEAT, AND THAT ONE BEING HELD BY FUGITIVE MP JOHN STONEHOUSE (AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, LABOR'S VOTING MAJORITY WOULD NOT BE THREATENED, BUT ITS RIGHT TO A MAJORITY ON COMMITTEES WOULD BE LOST BY THE DEATH OF A SINGLE LABOR MEMBER OR THE OUSTER OF STONEHOUSE). THE BY-ELECTION OUTCOME, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED BY LEADERS OF BOTH PARTIES AND THE MEDIA FOR SIGNS OF SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS IN POPULAR OPINION.

RICHARDSON

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